

## Alien life

### To discuss ...

- Do scientists believe that intelligent life may exist on other planets..?
  - Yes. But the crucial words are “may exist,” because no one knows. It’s only a theory. Scientists are now busy collecting evidence and looking for ways to prove or disprove this theory.
- What are some of the tools scientists are using to look for another civilization..?
  - Telescopes to find another “Earth-like” planet among the stars.
  - Radio telescopes (the big dish telescopes) to “listen” for a signal.
  - Spacecraft that are carrying a message from us to another civilization. Four of these spacecraft have been sent to wander among the stars. (As excitement grows about the discovery of other planets, NASA is now shifting gears, turning more of its resources to the search for other Earth-like planets, and perhaps intelligent life.)
- What are some scientific reasons that other civilizations may exist..?
  - We’ve discovered evidence that other planets are circling other stars, suggesting that billions of other planets may be circling billions of stars. (Scientists believed this was the case, but had no evidence until recently.)
  - The discovery of other planets has shifted the odds dramatically in favor of the theory that intelligent life may exist elsewhere in the Universe. *Another important discovery in recent years is that water, which scientists believe is necessary for life of any kind, seems to be abundant in the Universe.*
- Why do you think scientists, and lots of other people (maybe you, too) are so interested in finding out whether “somebody else” is out there..?
  - Finding the answer will have a major impact on understanding more about ourselves and the Universe we live in.
    - Suppose one day, we find nobody else is out there, and we have the entire Universe to ourselves. If so, then we are the most astonishing thing in the entire Universe. How would that make you feel..?
    - Suppose one day, we find lots of other civilizations on other planets. If so, some of them are likely to be a lot smarter than us, but also have many discoveries to share with us. How would that make you feel..?